

Idaho Energy Buzz

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Low Interest Loans Still Save Energy, Money

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After an exceptionally hot, dry summer, it may seem a little premature to talk about heating your home this winter. However, it's not too early, if you want to take advantage of the Energy Division's low-interest loans to replace an inefficient heating system or upgrade your insulation.

"The Energy Division has provided this loan for more than 20 years, and in that time, homeowners have saved a considerable amount of energy and lowered their utility bills significantly," says Bob Hoppie, Energy Division administrator.

Homeowners can also qualify for federal tax credits if projects meet IRS requirements and are completed by the end of 2007, and may qualify for state income tax deductions.

Loans are available in five sectors: residential, commercial and industrial, agricultural, government, and schools, hospitals and health care facilities at 4 percent interest for five years. Residential loans are available between \$1,000 and \$15,000, while loans in the remaining sectors cap at \$100,000.

Homeowners can also apply for a more efficient water heater and either a wood, pellet or gas stove. Renewable projects, available in all sectors, include solar, wind and geothermal. Commercial and industrial projects can include heating system upgrades, insulation, windows and energy-efficient lights.

To learn more about the program or to request an application, call the Idaho Energy Hotline, **1-800-334-SAVE**. Applications and criteria information are also available on the Energy Division's website at www.energy.idaho.gov.

Buying a New Refrigerator Just Got A Little Easier

Buying big-ticket appliances, such as stoves and refrigerators, can be quite a task. You want to buy one that suits your needs and is energy efficient, but you don't want to pay an arm and a leg in the process.

So how can you tell which appliances will get you the best bang for your buck? Look for the bright yellow **ENERGYGUIDE** label. Produced by the Federal Trade Commission, the EnergyGuide label has been streamlined and will display yearly operating costs prominently for most appliance types, according to the FTC.

This estimated cost information, which will appear on the labels in dollars per year, will provide consumers with a clear context to compare the energy efficiency of different appliance models. Idaho's electric rates are about 6.5 cents per kilowatt hour, depending on your utility company.

The new label will also help consumers assess trade-offs between the energy costs of the appliances and other expenditures. The label design will continue to display energy consumption information (e.g., annual electricity use) as a secondary disclosure for most labeled products.

When shopping for new appliances, look for the Energy Star[®] label. Energy Star qualified models, including refrigerators, require about half as much energy as models manufactured in the early 1990s, and provide energy savings without sacrificing the features you want.